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Contact: Amy Hewes
Cal Poly Engineering
[805-756-6402](tel:805-756-6402)
ahewes@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly Global Waste Research Institute Receives Keck Foundation Grant

SAN LUIS OBISPO — A recent \$250,000 grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation will allow the Cal Poly Global Waste Research Institute (GWRI) to integrate new waste-related issues and environmental impacts related to nanotechnology into the school's broader undergraduate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum.

GWRI Director Nazli Yesiller said the funds, which follow a \$50,000 Keck Foundation planning grant, will affect a wide variety of courses and disciplines, both technical and non-technical.

"The nanotechnology waste management portion could involve more than 700 students a year in nine separate disciplines including civil and environmental engineering, chemistry, materials engineering, mechanical engineering, biomedical engineering, industrial technology, political science, and ethnic studies" Yesiller said.

"Securing this grant involved a highly selective process and takes Cal Poly into a new area — a leading edge — of integrating new emerging waste-related subject matter into the classroom, an area for which currently no text books are available."

According to Yesiller, advancements have been made in the manufacture and use of nanomaterials with commercial applications and available products numbering in the thousands. However, the short-and long-term environmental impacts of these new materials and effectiveness of common waste management technologies for nanomaterials are largely unknown.

The Keck grant will support a postdoctoral fellow who will develop teaching and learning tools related to nanowaste management, including course content, classroom and laboratory exercises, databases and curriculum modules.

"This grant helps ensure that the next generation of workforce and graduate students will be equipped with awareness and interdisciplinary technical skills required for providing solutions to emerging global environmental problems," explained Yesiller.

The goal of GWRI is to educate future generations of professionals in sustainable waste and byproduct management.

For more information on GWRI, see gwri.calpoly.edu or call [805-756-2932](tel:805-756-2932).

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